

Fun with Coins

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Learning about money — how to save it, share it, make it and spend it — is usually of big interest to kids! So they're pretty motivated to learn all about coins.

Understanding how to count, use, and identify coins is an important basic money skill to learn at an early age. Using simple games, you can help your kids learn to recognize and understand the value of our currency — and help take the mystique out of

those shiny, funny-looking little coins.



When To Do It

Weekend day or weekday evening

What To Do

To introduce the coins and teach your kids about them, here are three fun activities that you can try on a weekend or evening after school.

1. Throw a bunch of coins onto the ground and challenge your kids to see who can:
 - Pick up the most coins in a time period. Start with 10 seconds, then try 30 seconds, then try one minute.
 - Pick up coins worth the most money.
 - Pick up coins worth an amount you specify.
 - Pick up the most of one type of coin.
 - Pick up the most of the type of coin worth 10 cents, the one worth 25 cents, or the one worth 5 cents.

Invent your own combinations of values to have them pick up until they are really good at recognizing the different coins.

2. Place coins under a sheet of paper and make pencil rubbings to study the differences between different coins. You can find some fun facts about each of the coins at the U.S. Mint website "History in Your Pocket" (H.I.P.) Pocket Change (<http://www.usmint.gov/kids/coinNews/circulating/>)
3. Play the "How Many Coins?" game with any coin denomination; for this example, we used pennies.
 - How many pennies, aligned side-by-side, does it take to reach a foot? A yard? The length of your shoe?
 - How many pennies fit into a stack one inch high? How many fit into a stack one foot high?
 - How many pennies fit into a 1/4-cup container? A 1/2 cup? Is it twice as many as the 1/4 cup?
 - How many pennies fit into an empty yogurt container (or other empty plastic container)?
 - Once you determine the number of coins, can you calculate the value of the coins in the containers?

What You Will Need

- Lot of coins (if you do not have enough loose change to play the games, stop by your bank for a variety of coin rolls)
- Paper; pencils or colored pencils
- Measuring cups and plastic containers
- Calculator

Talk About It

Can your kids better report the names and values of the coins after playing the coin games? Do they have a favorite type of coin? Can they remember whose images are on each of the U.S. coins?